



## **pied-billed grebe**

*Podilymbus podiceps*

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Aves
Order:	Podicipediformes
Family:	Podicipedidae

### **Features**

The pied-billed grebe is 12 to 15 inches long with a brown body. Its bill is rounded and the upper portion of the bill curves downward (other grebes have a pointed bill). This bird has a narrow head and neck. The arrangement of the feathers makes it seem like the grebe does not have a tail. Its tail is white on the underside.

### **Natural History**

The pied-billed grebe lives on ponds, lakes, marshes, sloughs, and rivers. It eats aquatic insects, crayfish, small fish, frogs, and mollusks (snails and mussels). It has a cuckoo-like call ("cow-cow-cow-cow-cow-cow-cowk-cowk"). It usually dives under water when it senses danger. After a dive, it often surfaces in vegetation. While resting, it holds its head erect. This bird makes its nest on a floating mat anchored to plants. Three to nine tan eggs are laid per clutch during the nesting period of May through July. After hatching, the young may be seen riding on their

parents' backs as the adults swim through the water. The pied-billed grebe is the most common of Iowa's grebes.

### **Habitats**

natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; Mississippi River; Missouri River

### **Iowa Status**

common; native

### **Iowa Range**

summer: scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats; migrant: statewide

### **Bibliography**

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.